

c) Remarks

The claims are 1, 3-13, 16-22 and 25-48 with claims 1, 25, 28 and 46 being independent. Claim 2 has been cancelled. Claims 1 and 25 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of cancelled claim 2 and to correct an informality. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to resolve formal matters. New claims 28-48 have been added. These claims are based, respectively, on claims 1, 3-7, 9-13, 16-22 and 25-27 prior to the present amendment, with the subject matter of claim 8 incorporated into the new independent claims. Clearly, no new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present claims is expressly requested.

As a formal matter, Applicants have noted that the Examiner crossed out JP 36-10231 on the PTO-1449 form filed on December 4, 2003, indicating that this document has not been considered. Since Applicants have timely provided the Examiner with a copy of JP 36-10231 and provided a concise explanation of its relevance (i.e., Applicants referred the Examiner to the specification where this document has been cited¹), it is respectfully requested that JP 36-10231 be considered and a written confirmation of such consideration be provided to Applicants.

Claims 1, 16 and 17 are objected to due to an informality. Applicants have amended these claims to correct the informality and respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Claims 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite. In view of the above amendment to these claims, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

¹ Applicants note that JP 36-10231 is cited in the specification at page 53, line 25.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 18, 21, 22 and 25-27 stand rejected as obvious over Tokunaga '740 in view of Diamond pages 162-203 and further in view of Gruber '338 and finally, in view of JP 56-159654.

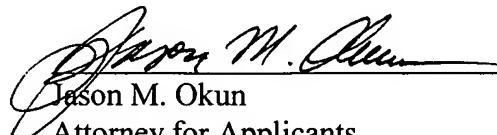
Without acquiescence, and solely expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 25 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which the Examiner deemed allowable over the cited art. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3-7-13, 16-22 and 25-27 are in allowable form.

Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 28-48 are patentable over the cited art. As mentioned above, these claims are based on 1, 3-7, 9-13, 16-22 and 25-27 and include the features of claim 8, which the Examiner deemed patentable.

Wherefore, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding objection and rejections be withdrawn and that the present case be passed to issue.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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